

Milwaukee County Board Chairman
County Supervisor, 1st District

For Immediate Release February 4, 2016
Contact: Bill Zaferos, Public Information Manager
414/278-4230 or William.zaferos@milwaukeecountywi.gov

County Board Unanimously Adopts Alternatives to Allow Placement of Juveniles in Milwaukee County
Measure Seeks Milwaukee County Location, Increases Number of Local Beds, Adds Staff

The Milwaukee County Board today unanimously passed a measure to allow placement of juveniles in Milwaukee County facilities rather than the Lincoln Hills School for Boys and the Copper Lake school for girls in Irma, Wisconsin.

Chairman Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., who introduced the measure along with Supervisors Marina Dimitrijevic and Supreme Moore Omokunde, said it was critical for the Board to act immediately to provide the judiciary with options to remove children from the unsafe environment at Lincoln Hills as soon as possible and provide both secure facilities and staff to accommodate them in Milwaukee County. Chief Judge Maxine White, who has toured the facilities, called conditions there “inhumane.”

“It is time to move beyond visits. We have seen enough. We have heard enough,” Lipscomb said. “These are our kids, they’re three-and-a-half hours away from home. We must protect them. It is important that we move to a local solution that better meets the needs of the community.”

The collaborative legislation adopted by the Board responds to policy requests of the Judiciary and provides tools for the Administration to begin these changes, specifically staff to implement alternatives and monitor services at Lincoln Hills.

The measure authorizes the creation of twelve positions for the Department of Health and Human Services, allows juveniles to stay in Milwaukee County by increasing the capacity of Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP) to increase the options the judiciary has when adjudicating youth. It also requests that the Delinquency and Court Services Division (DCSD) immediately send human service workers and trained professionals with clinical oversight to provide immediate assessments of youths confined at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake. It moves forward additional options and capacity for the courts with a full 365-day secure detention option and a female-specific MCAP program.

The measure authorizes the Superintendent of the House of Correction (HOC) to study the feasibility and cost associated with using HOC as a dispositional placement for serious juvenile offenders and authorizes the Administration to work with the state to create secure and non-secure Residential Care Centers for Children and Youth for Milwaukee County youths.

“It is time to bring these kids home, to protect these youths from further violence, and stop paying the state to operate this failed institution. That’s why today we brought forward policies to start changing juvenile justice at the local level. This Administration needs a policy push from the legislative branch to think bigger and do more.”

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